

# EATING WITH STRANGERS

TEXT & PHOTO BY AWU SEKAR



"Sometimes we may be stuck without a date or a plan for a Saturday night. Well if you are in Ubud, have no fear, as Bridges, that enigmatic and delightful restaurant by the river, has the solution."

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The Bridging Table offers company, a cocktail and a delicious meal for a fixed price and you never know who you may meet. It is perfectly acceptable to bring a friend, although if there are lots of people, and the table looks like fun, you may like to split up, and spread your options.

All kinds of people can be found there - local expats, tourists or visitors and even sometimes, some guests from the 'deep south', you just never know.

For your complimentary beverage you may choose from a glass of one of their premium wines or a cocktail. Their Mojito is well recommended. So after a cocktail and some tempting little canapés where the ice is broken and the diners get to know each other, it is time to move down to the beautiful main dining room. Open to the river below and the cool Ubud night, it is the perfect temperature and the perfect ambience to enjoy the meal.

Then it's on to the food. Wine is available from their excellent cellar, although this will be a well tolerated add on.

Each of the three courses has three choices - delicate delicious and often a cunning combination of flavours. My favourite was the Gorgonzola Crème Brulee - cleverly baked in half a green apple. The sweetness of the apple contrasted nicely with the soft tangy custard. The little treat was accompanied by a huge fresh salad of rucola, candied pecan, orange segments and a tangy balsamic glaze. Heaven! It was so delicious I totally missed the sparkling conversation going on around me! My neighbour tried the seared eggplant dumplings and even though I tried a small sample, I was so taken with my dish that I forget how good theirs was!

For the mains we ordered the baked apple and blue cheese tortellini, this was topped with roasted pecans. It came surrounded with a divine apple reduction with truffle oil and a little rucola. Very nice!

Then the piece de resistance was the Thai Inspired Barramundi. A little extra fresh fillet of Barramundi comes with a crust of sesame seeds and a green mango and crab salad. The trio of sauces accompanying it included a divine caramelized tamarind sauce, a sweet chili sauce and a very exotic sounding nam jim sauce - all too good to be true.

Desserts included the slightly heavy Baked lemon slice - also very tangy but not quite as good as it could have been. The Apple-Tamarillo Crumble, however, was more than fantastic. Topped with grated coconut and mixed nuts and served with Vanilla gelato and cinnamon Crème Anglaise, it was almost too much after the other delicious fare.

Each dish has a suggested wine pairing for those who want to go the whole hog, including the really enjoyable Pino De Bali, dessert wine - the best offering from the Hattens brand. Apparently it has won several awards and there are reasons why.

Bridges hold their Bridging Table every Saturday night and it is advised to book ahead. While steakaterians may come away a little disappointed, vegans and vegetarians are well catered for and the lovely kitchen staff will make an extra vegetarian effort so there is no need to worry about dietary restraints.

Come and enjoy the change and you never know who you may meet.!

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## "PERSPECTIVES BY MICHAEL JOHNSEY" AT **BRIDGES BALI**

The work of Michael Johnsey will be hanging on the walls of Bridges Bali restaurant throughout this year. Johnsey's beautiful black and white photographs capture special and intense moments of the life in Indonesia, especially Bali, as seen through a photographer's lens. He shows in his shots his deep feeling for this beautiful country, witnessing the change that is taking place and making testimony of many scenes that will soon belong to the past. View photographs [here](#). As always, bridges is supporting a charity organization and donating 20% of the sales proceeds to The Safe Childhoods Foundation, an organization that combats crimes against children and has developed a range of projects designed to protect and support some the most vulnerable, traumatized and at-risk children.!

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